

**Dominion Command
Veterans, Service and Seniors Committee
VIA ZOOM
26 May 2022, 1330 – 1455
Record of Discussion**

File: 65-1

IN ATTENDANCE:

Bruce Julian	-	Chairman
Owen Parkhouse	-	Vice-Chairman
Bill Chafe	-	Member
John Mahon	-	Member
Dave Gordon	-	Homeless Veterans
George O'Dair	-	Seniors Advisor
Larry Murray	-	Ex-Officio

DOMINION COMMAND STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Raymond McInnis	-	Coordinator
Dwayne McCarthy	-	Assistant Coordinator

ABSENT

**Trevor Jenvenne-
BSO Legion OSI Special Section**

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed everyone to our second meeting in 2022. He advised the Committee that Alexa Pasha, one of the new Service Officers at Dominion Command will be joining the Committee as an Assistant Coordinator, she will be in attendance for our September meeting.

The Chair recently attended the RBL Convention and the Legion Scotland conventions with the National Executive Director. He provided information on the conventions and that they may be reaching out to us for information on the Membership portal, electronic membership cards, online processing.

2. REVIEW OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes from 24 February 2022 were reviewed and there were no action items from these minutes. There was a comment from Comrade Bill from previous minutes on the commemoration of our WWII Veterans. Comrade Owen advised that it was mentioned at the PR meeting and will follow-up to ensure the Legion is proactive in commemorating these Veterans before they pass on. The Coordinator will also forward to the NED so it can be raised at the next DM coffee chat and with the MVA Commemoration Advisory Committee.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded that the members approve the minutes of the last Committee meeting held on 24 February 2022.

CARRIED

3. UPDATE – MEETING WITH THE RCMP COMMISSIONER

The Chair provided an update on the meeting that was held on 26 April 2022 with Commissioner Brenda Lucki and the Corps Sergeant-Major, Al McCambridge.

A discussion ensued whether to extend a one-time introductory invitation to the RCMP Corps Sergeant-Major and the CFCWO to a DEC, this would be an informative meeting.

Notes from the 26 April meeting are attached to these minutes.

4. UPDATE - ADVOCACY – INCOME REPLACEMENT BENEFIT

The issue will be brought up with the Ministerial Policy Advisory Committee when these meetings resume, an update will be provided in the fall 2022.

5. VETERANS HOMELESSNESS – UPDATE

Comrade Dave presented the following veterans homelessness report. COVID-19 has not stopped Homeless Veterans. We continue to see more and more Homeless Veterans coming forward and seeking assistance from the Legion and with the restrictions from the pandemic being lifted the need for assistance is increasing.

The following is a review of the 2021 Quarterly reports (numbers assisted) by Command which has been updated with additional numbers from Ontario Command.

BC/Yukon – over 100 from Cockrell House (I used the 100 number) a few female homeless veterans. Note there has been indication of Homeless Veterans being assisted in the interior, Comox Valley, however they were not reported through the Quarterly report.

Alberta/NWT – 9 – 1 Female

Saskatchewan – 30

Man/NWO – 1 – Female

Ontario – 1002 – 111 Female

Quebec – 150

Nova Scotia – 15 – 2 Female

New Brunswick - 39- 1 Female

PEI - 2

Newfoundland - 0

Total: 1,349 of which 116 are Female.

NOTE: Female numbers are included in the totals.

Other than Ontario Command there was not much information given to the monetary funds spent on the program and we will be asking for more detail in the future. I also note for you the numbers are not complete as there was no 1st Quarter reports from New Brunswick or Quebec.

The Toronto Police Services continue to promote their Veterans Well Being program and did a presentation to the Canadian Police Association in Ottawa. Comrade Dave attended and presented a report in regard to the RCL Homeless Veterans program, which was well received. There were over 100 members present and we stayed after the program for photos and Q&A. He also had the opportunity to discuss the Legion program with several officers from across Canada and Vancouver and Calgary were a couple that showed interest. An email has been set up with Dominion Command for the RCMP to forward any referral forms for Homeless Veterans. I note the RCMP are in the early stages of setting up their program and we have been in contact to provide assistance; additional information will follow. The TPS program was to have the official launch March 1 and we are still waiting for this to happen.

Veterans House in Ottawa is full, and we are seeing some Veterans moving out and others replacing the vacancy.

Reports from various municipalities regarding Point in Time counts are slowly being released and Comrade Dave will update at the next meeting.

CAEH/ Built For Zero Canada, have recently renewed contracts with various cities across Canada and with the requirement of Homeless By Name lists by the Federal Government, they are also including Homeless Veterans on the lists. As a result, they have the various municipalities adding this information to their Intake Documents. Kelowna, Whitehorse, Fort McMurray, Medicine Hat, Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John and St. John's are all on the new list. He noted that Moncton and Saint John have one Homeless Veteran identified and Fredericton have 2. He is seeking further information and will be in contact with NB Command to see if assistance is required. BC/Yukon is meeting with BFZ to set up a program in their command.

Comrades Dave and Ray attended a Virtual, National Housing Strategy session which was conducted under the BFZ umbrella. The session had various topics, there were six

panelists who gave brief presentations, and one in particular was housing for Aboriginals. Housing is an ongoing concern and at some point in time the RCL will have to determine how to address the concerns and future participation.

6. SENIORS REPORT

Comrade George advised that there is little new to report to this meeting except that Premiers of most Provinces seem to be promising anything and everything to correct deficiencies noted during the more active days of COVID.

There is funding promised for: many new LTC beds; thousands of new nurses and other care providers; programs to help Seniors stay at home and other indications of support. Will these things transpire? Where will new doctors and other health care staff come from? Currently, many doctors have retired, and many nurses have been overworked, fed up and left the service. Provinces will have to come up with some substantial funding to get them back and to entice new professionals into the field. It is noted that some new LTC beds and new and/or expanded LTC construction have already been started and that's good news.

So, with or without a pandemic, healthcare, especially for Seniors, remains a real issue. For instance, locally, here is this city of about 50,000, with an aging population, we're down to one walk-in clinic from the previous three and even the remaining clinic is professionally staffed by only 2 or 3 doctors and from outside Ontario. He believes that this situation is similar in many Canadian cities.

Now that our Branches are opening up, perhaps it's time to remind them that we do have a Seniors Manual on the Dominion Command website that has many suggestions on how they can involve Seniors in our Branches.

7. BSO LEGION OSI SPECIAL SECTION REPORT

Comrade Trevor advised that he could not make the meeting and will provide an update at our next meeting.

8. TRYCYCLE DATA SYSTEMS – VAC – TALKING STICK APP

Comrade Bruce advised that correspondence on TryCycle Data and the Talking Stick app was forwarded in advance of the meeting for review.

Comrade Steven attended the TryCon22 event yesterday and due to power outages across the city, the location and schedule was changed at the last minute. A keynote speaker could not sign in from the States, and the other two presenters in person highlighted their personal journeys but not much information on the Talking Stick App.

Due to the shortened schedule and other commitments, the meeting with TryCycle and Chief Gamble was postponed.

There is no additional information on the details of TryCycle's request to the Legion or how they envision a Legion service delivery model for Talking Stick. There will be additional meetings planned to understand the requirement. Talking Stick is a good app and it is recommended at this time to send a letter of support to MVA for Talking Stick and then once we learn more of the requirement, then we can make an informed decision on Legion involvement with TryCycle and the Talking Stick app. Information on Talking Stick is attached to these minutes.

MOTION: Recommend that the Dominion President send a letter of support to MVA on the Talking Stick App and to continue the discussion with TryCycle Data Systems on Legion involvement with service delivery.

CARRIED

9. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS/ROUNDTABLE

No additional agenda items were tabled.

10. NEXT MEETING

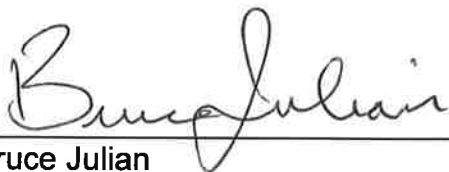
The next meeting for the VSS Committee is scheduled for **22 September** via Zoom at 1330. Next meeting is tentatively scheduled for 24 November 2022.

11. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING COMMENTS AND ADJOURNMENT

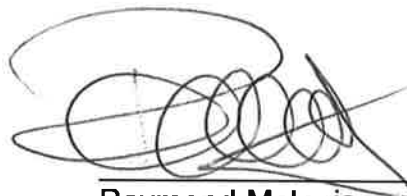
The Chair thanked all for their input, it was an excellent meeting. Stay safe and be well!

MOTION: It was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 1455.

CARRIED



Bruce Julian
CHAIRMAN



Raymond McInnis
COORDINATOR

Dated 27 May 2022

INTRODUCTORY MEETING WITH RCMP COMMISSIONER

Date: 26 April 2022 1100-1200

RCMP attendees:

RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki
RCMP Corps Sergeant Major Al McCambridge

Legion attendees:

Dominion President: Bruce Julian
National Executive Director: Steven Clark
Director, Veterans Services and Coordinator, VSS Committee: Ray McInnis
Deputy Director, Veterans Services and Coordinator, Carolyn Hughes and Ray McInnis

They arrived on time from another meeting and did not have time to change into regimental dress to meet the 1100 start time. Therefore, no pictures will be sent externally via social media on the installation as a Honourary Dominion Vice-President.

Notes:

- Comrade Bruce welcomed everyone to the introductory meeting and thanked the Commissioner for taking time out of her busy schedule to meet with us.
- Welcome comments included honorable mention of the work on the Defence and Security Committee by Brendan Heffernan and Brian Sauve. Also mentioned the President of the BSO Legion OSI Special Section Trevor Jenvenne is a former RCMP member, who also sits on the Veterans, Service and Seniors Committee
- The need for Peer Support for RCMP Members and Veterans who have Experienced Service-Related Sexual Trauma. (Provided the information from the Ombuds report on the recommendation that the CAF and VAC establish a peer support program for CAF members and Veterans who have experienced military sexual trauma. Our recommendation is for the RCMP develop and provide a dedicated peer support program for survivors of service-related sexual trauma.
 - The Commissioner advised of a national initiative called Lived Experience with MH and they have met virtually with these Veterans, but plans are to have an in-person meeting in September. **We requested to be in attendance to present to this forum and to present to the RCMP Disability Management Advisors.**

- She also mentioned the EAP and VAC services if Veterans have a disability benefit, and they also utilized the Legion OSI Special Section. **We advised to expect a letter signed by the President requesting the need for peer support on this issue.**
- The Commissioner advised that staff have taken the free GBA+ course and using GBA+ when researching equipment purchases, changes in the dormitories at Depot, etc.
- They are also now providing neutral bathrooms for transgender etc. which would make them more comfortable for their six months stay in dorm accommodations at Depot. This is to encourage recruitment.
- Looking at clinical resiliency training at Depot
- Mentioned the RCMP Longitudinal Study on PTSD and hope to have some results by end year from the study
- Mentioned the peer-to-peer SOSI
- Steven presented a brief Legion presentation (adopted from the D&S presentation) which outlined the key issues previously sent to their office. Issues included:
 - Legion Advocacy
 - Legion representation to RCMP still-serving and Veterans applying to VAC for disability benefits and appeals to VRAB
 - The definition of a veteran and advocating for VAC to include RCMP veterans and members for commemorative purposes
 - The impact of the housing crisis on RCMP members with postings to high cost of living places.
 - The Commissioner explained that they try not to transfer graduates to high-cost areas unless they ask for the posting (family resides in these areas and can provide support) and they are in the top percentile of their class.
 - Peer Support – mentioned above.
 - Minister of Public Safety Mandate Letter –
 - The Commissioner spoke about the ICHR and the mandate for externalization, it is proving to be a difficult task. They hired two contractors to review ICHR. Depending on the outcome of the review, may only externalize the sexual misconduct portion and keep the ICHR the way it is now.
 - Also looking at an external committee to triage on the front end because too many incidents get classed as Harassment, although they may be conflict or sexual misconduct.
 - For the Minister's Mandate points, she advised she will be receiving her own letter (marching orders) and expects it to be similar to the Minister of Public Safety mandate letter.

Legion Support & Engagement

- Steven briefed on the Homeless Veterans “Leave the Streets Behind” program. Ray updated them on the Toronto Police Service and OPP initiatives for the program. Dave Gordon is working with the RCMP Corps Sgt Major on the RCMP initiative, and he will brief the Commissioner and CHRO on the program
- Op Harmony Initiative (an EDI assessment of the Legion’s leadership, membership, polices and programs) and examining options for support and recognition for the RCMP Indigenous Youth Program
 - We advised that we are in contact at Depot and exploring the possibility of presenting an award/plaque for top cadet in the Pre-Cadet Indigenous training program, Bold Eagle.
- Explore cross-promotion opportunities: raise awareness of free one-year membership for RCMP and Legion promotion of RCMP-focused topics to our members
- 150th anniversary activities
 - The Commissioner advised that they are developing a 150th Anniversary logo and toolkit, will share with the Legion and will provide contacts for Marketing and Communication. Also, will send a communique to all members and Veterans advising of Veterans Services support and the free one-year Legion membership for members and Veterans.
 - Steven mentioned that Jennifer Morse is the GM of CANVET (separate organization) and the publisher of Legion magazine. They publish the RCMP Quarterly, Steven will reach out to Jennifer re: possible article/pull out/SIP for the RCMP 150th Anniversary
- Bruce completed the installation ceremony, picture for internal use only. He presented his Dominion Presidential coin to the Commissioner and the Corps Sgt-Major. In response, they presented the RCMP regimental coin to all attendees.

Al McCambridge will follow-up on some issues and forward contact information to the Legion.

OUR CHALLENGE

HOPE IS NOT A STRATEGY

Vaccination campaigns, marketing, and billboards have reached the point of diminishing return. While challenges of this magnitude cannot be filled with promises or hope, we can work together to harness the compassion and power that is inherent in every Indigenous community.

As First Nation communities big and small continue to be at risk of infection, we must use everything at our disposal to address the physical, spiritual, and emotional impact of the pandemic. We believe, listening, empathy, respect, and dialogue are some of the last weapons we have left in our collective arsenal.

OUR GOAL

COMPASSIONATE, CULTURE-BASED LISTENING

Helping Indigenous individuals feel confident about the vaccine means we need to stop blaming and start listening. We must stop characterizing the unvaccinated as selfish, close-minded, or conspiracy-obsessed people. Shaming someone will not change behaviour, and fear-based pressure tactics are not working.

Instead, community-based resources can help to enhance trust and provide a safe option for conversations about vaccines and pandemic-fueled issues. By facilitating access between vaccine-hesitant individuals and a network of Indigenous Peers, culture-based resources (including Youth, Adults, and Elders) can play a crucial role in having non-judgmental conversations.

OUR APPROACH

EVERY VOICE MATTERS

This program will create a first-of-its-kind Indigenous Peer Advocate human network to support community health and healing. Paired with this network, the Talking Stick app will facilitate access to one-on-one conversations with community-based peers who are trained to listen. It is the Peers themselves that share both language and culture, who are the best equipped to understand the challenges and resilience of their people.

The Talking Stick App will provide opportunities to demonstrate support and understanding of the challenges and issues affecting First Nations communities, **one conversation at a time**. The Talking Stick program encourages confidential chat-based discussions between real people in real time, about vaccine hesitancy, mental wellness, emotional health, violence, anger, isolation (depression, stress, loneliness), trauma, grief, and loss.

Every Voice Matters is the theme of Talking Stick, which represents the program's commitment to language, inclusion, and self-determination. The anonymous chat platform will provide a safe destination for every First Nation individual to share in confidence their concerns, fears, questions, and emotions related to vaccine anxiety, pandemic-related distress, and other culturally specific topics as they emerge.

OUR COMMITMENT

PRIVACY AND TRUST

Use of the Talking Stick app does not require any registration or login information, ever, such that the Talking Stick app can only be used anonymously. Neither the application itself nor our Peer Advocates will ever collect or store, either directly or indirectly, any personally identifiable information whatsoever. Aggregated utilization and engagement data will be gathered only, to help our Program Administrators assess the adoption of this tool (for example: the number of app downloads, how often the app is used, and the nature of the conversations by category/type).

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

JOB CREATION, SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND A LASTING INFRASTRUCTURE

- Hiring & Training of 225+ community-based Indigenous Peer Advocates across the province of Saskatchewan
- Emphasis on advancing First Nation economic development and social support systems
- Provides an anonymous chat platform, connecting Indigenous individuals to culture-based support and confidential conversations
- Strengthens language and culture; the anonymous chat service is available in 7 First Nation languages
- Peers provide opportunities for referrals to specialty resources in the community, culture-based events, and other support resources

HOW IT WORKS

Individuals can access a free app or website, to be used anonymously. The Talking Stick App provides a method to create connections with trusted community members of their own choosing, from a list of trained and available resources.

Simply download the free mobile app or access the Talking Stick website on your computer, select a First Nations community you identify with, pick a trusted Peer Advocate from the list and the rest is simple: Speak and Be Heard.

Through this connection, peers can also provide a warm hand-off to community-based health resources and services if additional support is needed/wanted. This could be in the form of sharing a phone number or providing the name of a health professional or resources.

PROGRAM PARTNERS

- Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations
- Indigenous Services Canada
- TryCycle Data Systems Inc.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Email: info@talkingstick.app

Website: <https://trycycledata.com/indigenous/>